

Memorandum of Interview With Norvell
E. Wallace; Federal Building, Memphis,
Tennessee, July 8, 1976.

Norvell E. Wallace, a lieutenant in the Memphis, Tenn. Fire Department, was interviewed by team members Folsom and Walker on July 8, 1976.

Wallace stated that on April 4, 1968, he had been stationed at Fire Station No. 33, located at S. Main and E. Butter Streets, for about two years. On April 3, 1968, his shift was from 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 A.M. the next day. However, at approximately 10:00 or 10:30 on the night of the 3rd, his captain told him that a call had come in requesting that a man be detailed to fire station No. 33, located near the airport. Wallace said that he normally went to bed about 11:00 P.M. and that it was raining that night, but he was sent to Station 33 immediately after the call was received and was detailed there for approximately three months.

Wallace stated that he does not know why he was transferred, but he explained the order had to come from the deputy chief or chief. While Wallace does not know whether fire station No. 33 was under-staffed as a whole, he does know that there was no shortage of personnel for the pump truck on which he worked. He said the hose size on the pump truck at Station No. 33 required only four men for the truck and they already had the four men there. Nevertheless, during the detail, Wallace rode the pump

truck as an extra fifth man.

Wallace stated that during the sanitation strike there were numerous trash fires. At one time he heard that he was transferred to Station No. 33 because of threats on his life. However, he can recall only one incident which could be considered a threat. This occurred at the scene of a trash fire when Wallace, the only black with the firemen responding to the fire, heard a black woman say: "Wait til dark. we will get you."

Wallace stated that police squad cars regularly gas up at the fire stations, and that during the sanitation strike the Tactical Units were in and out of the fire station at various times. He recalled that both Willie Richmond and Edward Reddick were undercover police officers who observed Dr. King and the strike supporters at the Lorraine Motel from a look-out post in the rear of the fire station. Wallace said an individual with the King party known as "baby Jesus" was being watched very carefully. However, Wallace stated that he did not overhear any discussions by the Tactical Unit members and did not know whether any FBI personnel were among the observers.

Wallace volunteered that he had been a supporter of the sanitation worker's strike and had attended some of their rallies. However, he said this was not discussed at the fire station as his support was primarily financial.